

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT****Routing Slip**

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9	Chm/NIC				
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Remarks:

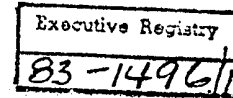
*[Signature]*  
 Executive Secretary  
3/17/83  
 Date

5537 (10-4-11)

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

1469

March 16, 1983



MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE GEORGE P. SHULTZ  
Secretary of State

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM FRENCH SMITH  
Attorney General

THE HONORABLE H. EUGENE DOUGLAS  
U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs

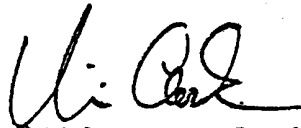
SUBJECT: Review of Indochinese Refugee Processing

Twelve Senators sent the attached letter to the President concerning the processing of refugees in Indochina. Press reports last month focused on this matter as well.

Proper implementation of the program in a manner consistent with United States policy and law is, as you know, important to U.S. political and humanitarian objectives. The President has requested a prompt review of this situation. This should identify what steps have been taken, or will need to be taken, to ensure such implementation of the program.

This review should be prepared by the Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General. It should be forwarded by March 31.


FOR THE PRESIDENT:

  
William P. Clark

Attachment  
Tab A Letter dtd. 2/16/83

cc: The Director, Office of Management and Budget  
The Director of Central Intelligence



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VSD 93  
  
XF 2280

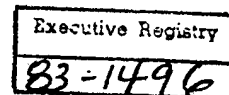
## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C.

February 16, 1983

125952

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500



Dear Mr. President:

Recent reports from Thailand document the appalling performance of the Immigration and Naturalization Service field officers charged with the responsibility of processing Indochinese refugees seeking resettlement in the United States. Attorney General Smith visited Thailand in October, 1982, and subsequently sent a special INS team overseas to assist in the review and processing of refugee applications.

While we were pleased with Attorney General Smith's valuable intervention in this matter of considerable international significance, we are still concerned that the intransigence of the INS field staff has persisted. Because of the serious implications which would attend the perception that the United States is indifferent to the concerns of the Thai government and the plight of Indochinese refugees, we feel your personal intervention in this dispute is desperately needed.

At issue, Mr. President, is the United States' ability to enforce the policies promulgated by you with respect to Indochinese refugees. As you know, the United States approved a ceiling of 64,000 Asian refugees for Fiscal Year 1983. Reports from Southeast Asia show that by dubious application of facts and law, the middle-level INS officers in Thailand have prevented your Administration's refugee policy from being implemented fairly. The definition of "refugee" has been inconsistently applied, as recent media reports have documented, and the rejection rate of refugee applicants who were pre-selected by the State Department underscores the argument that the Thailand INS operation has been arbitrary, if not hostile, in processing Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees. INS field officers in Thailand have conducted themselves in such a fashion as to warrant a cable from Washington detailing explicit rules of conduct and courtesy for those officers to follow when processing Indochinese applicants. This is not only an embarrassing instance of impropriety, but it reflects the clear fact that the policy of continued asylum in Southeast Asia for refugees who flee communist regimes (and whose ties to America brand them as pariahs) is in grave jeopardy.

Mr. President, we are not seeking higher levels of refugee admissions to this country. In fact, the United States will not be able to admit even half of the approved number of refugees

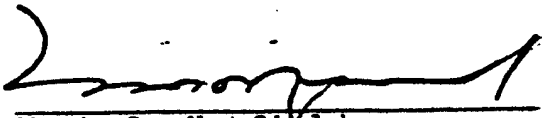
The President

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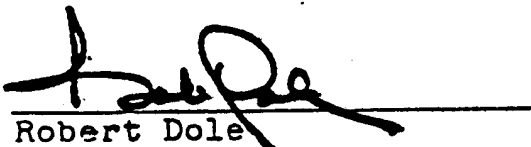
from Southeast Asia because of the lamentable performance of INS field officers in Thailand. The Thai government has grown weary of the inconsistent application of expressed Administration policy on refugee admissions, and we fear a program of forced repatriation is no longer a mere remote possibility. The United States' role, both in the interests of consistent foreign policy and humanitarian concerns, must not be undercut by feuding, uncooperative INS officers.

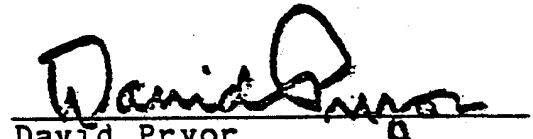
We are anxious for your prompt, personal involvement in this matter.

Sincerely,

  
 Mark O. Hatfield


  
 Paul E. Tsongas

  
 Robert Dole

  
 David Pryor

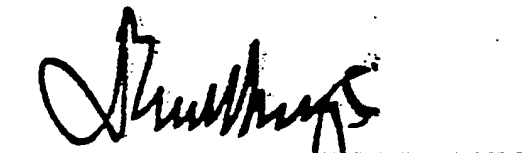
  
 John C. Danforth

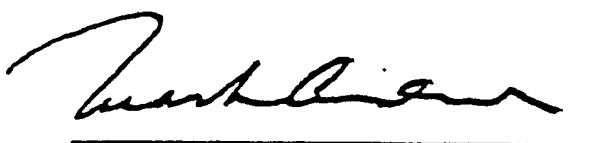
  
 Warren B. Rudman

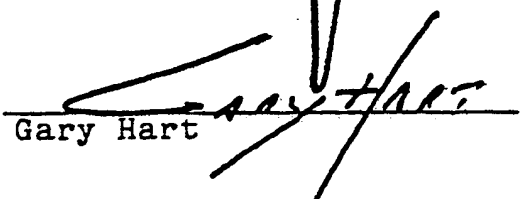
  
 Dan Quayle

  
 Carl Levin

  
 Mack Mattingly

  
 Daniel K. Inouye

  
 Mark N. Andrews

  
 Gary Hart

The President

February 16, 1983

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*John Melcher*  
John Melcher